Conservation Security Program

Orchards and Vineyards Fact Sheet **Minnesota, 2006**

Natural Resources Conservation Service
United States Department of Agriculture

What is the Conservation Security Program (CSP)?

CSP is a unique new program that offers payments for topnotch conservation farmers and growers. Unlike other programs that help producers fix resource problems, CSP rewards those who already act as model conservationists. It also pays qualified producers to do further environmental enhancements, such as additional conservation treatments, evaluation, on-farm demonstrations and more.

CSP is a three-tiered program with different requirements for each tier. All CSP producers, regardless of the tier at which they participate, must ultimately address minimum treatment criteria for soil quality and water quality. Techniques to achieve these soil and water quality criteria will vary depending on your farms slope, climate, soil texture, crops grown and other characteristics. Typically, sound resource management will include activities such as those shown below and will result in fertile soil with valuable organic matter that is protected from erosion. Additionally, pesticides and nutrients will be managed to help keep surface and groundwater clean to protect human and environmental health. For cropland, orchards, and vineyards consider the following checklist.

Do you currently…

- **Rotate your crops if applicable?**
- **Control erosion or soil loss?**
- **Use buffers to protect water sources?**
- **Test soils and apply fertilizers accordingly?**
- **Keep records of fertilizer and pesticide applications?**
- **If irrigated, schedule applications based on crop needs?**
- **Are you willing to pursue additional conservation enhancements?**

Producers in the two Minnesota Watersheds selected for 2006 may qualify for CSP if they are addressing natural resource concerns on their cropland by:

- Using mulch till or a reduced tillage system that leaves crop residues on the soil surface.
- Using a conservation crop rotation
- Applying fertilizer according to University of MN Extension Service recommendations.
- Collecting soil test information and keeping records of fertilizer and pesticide applications.
- Controlling soil erosion including drainage ways subject to wash outs after rain storms.